

Retaining telephone counsellor volunteers at Lifeline Darling Downs and South West Queensland Limited: A consideration of counselling self-efficacy

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Many volunteer organisations experience difficulties with being able to successfully recruit and retain their volunteers. This has been the case for Lifeline Darling Downs and South West Queensland, a non-profit telephone counselling service in Toowoomba. This organisation has experienced high levels of volunteer turnover in the past 12 months. A project was designed to investigate some of the possible factors that are associated with volunteer retention. In particular, this paper attempted to consider the influence of counselling self-efficacy on volunteer retention. Participants consisted of 40 telephone counsellors (31 women and 9 men), from Lifeline Darling Downs and South West Queensland. They were requested to complete two surveys that were designed specifically for Lifeline Telephone Counsellors (TCs). These surveys measured TCs' satisfaction with; accreditation, supervision and the organisational climate. Participants were also required to complete an inventory that measured their counselling self-efficacy, a scale that measured their emotional well-being at work, and a scale that measured their intentions to leave Lifeline. This study revealed that there was a significant negative relationship between satisfaction with accreditation and organisational satisfaction with intentions to leave. There was found to be no relationship between counselling self-efficacy and intentions to leave; and no relationship between counselling self-efficacy and satisfaction with supervision. Furthermore, there was no significant difference between levels of counselling self-efficacy based on years of telephone counselling experience, and no significant difference between levels of counselling self-efficacy and level of training. Overall the sample indicated a high level of counselling self-efficacy and it is recommended that future research assess counselling self-efficacy prior to TC training.